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| 10/568,145 | 02/13/2006 | Masatoshi Kuwajima | OGW0418 | 7755 |

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| EXAMINER |
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FISCHER, JUSTIN R

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1791

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03/31/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

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| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/568,145 | Applicant(s) KUWAJIMA ET AL. | |
| | Examiner Justin R. Fischer | Art Unit 1791 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 February 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 2, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reuter (EP 624667, newly cited). As best depicted in Figure 1, Reuter teaches a pneumatic tire construction comprising a plurality of working belt plies 15 and a radially outermost overlay (belt reinforcing layer) formed of aramid cords. The reference further teaches that the aramid cord should have an elongation of 3% at a load/stress between 60 N and 90 N (Page 6, Lines 37-41). Based on such a disclosure, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to select an aramid cord having an elongation between 1.5% and 5.5% at a load of 67 N. As to the axial positioning of the belt reinforcing layer, Reuter teaches that the respective ends overlap the ends of the radially outermost belt layer by a few millimeters (Page 3, Lines 43-45). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have recognized such language as including embodiments having an overlap of at least 5 millimeters and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed degree of overlap.

Regarding claim 2, as detailed above, the reference generally teaches that the ends of overlay extend a few millimeters beyond the ends of the underlying belt plies. Furthermore, based on the curvature of the crown region, it appears that the diameter of the overlay ends is less than the diameter of the overlay at the equatorial plane of the tire. It is evident that the respective outer diameters are a function of the specific tire being manufactured (absolute value of diameters). Thus, a plurality of tire constructions in Reuter would satisfy the broad range of the claimed invention and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed range. It is further noted that the "overlap" described by Reuter is an absolute dimension and is not a function of the specific tire size (diameter relationship would be greater in smaller tires).

With respect to claim 5, the claim is directed to the method of forming the belt reinforcement layer and thus does not further define the structure of the claimed tire construction. It is further noted that Reuter discloses a method in which the belt reinforcement layer is formed by spiral winding (Page 3, Lines 43+).

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reuter as applied in claim 1 above and further in view of Poque (DE 4209817, of record). As detailed above, Reuter substantially teaches the tire of the claimed invention, including a belt reinforcement layer formed of a reinforcing element having an elongation between 1.5% and 5.5% at a loading of 67 N. The reference, however, fails to suggest the use of cords having a lower modulus (higher elongation) in the overlap portion, as compared to the cords used in the region above the belt layers. Poque, on the other hand, is

directed to a similar tire construction comprising an outermost belt reinforcement layer, wherein the shoulder regions are formed with a cord having a smaller modulus, as compared to the cord used in the overlapped portion. Poque further teaches that such a construction improves dimensional stability during high speed running. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to use a cord having a smaller modulus in the shoulder portion, as compared to the overlapped portion.

4. Claims 1, 2, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirai (JP 2003002015) and further in view of Reuter. As best depicted in the figures, Hirai discloses a pneumatic tire construction having a plurality of belt layers 6 and a radially outermost belt reinforcement layer 7, wherein said belt reinforcement layer overhangs the end of the underlying belt layers by a distance of at least 10 mm. The reference further suggests the use of a wide variety of reinforcing materials for the belt reinforcement layer, including aramid reinforcing cords (Paragraph 16). While the reference fails to expressly describe any specific aramid cord, the claimed aramid cord is recognized as providing good high speed properties, low noise emission, and low thickness (Page 2, Lines 25-27). As such, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to form the belt reinforcement layer of Hirai with the reinforcing elements of Reuter.

With respect to claim 2, as noted above, the amount of overhang can be as small as 10 millimeters, which falls in the middle of the claimed range between 5 and 20 millimeters. In this instance, Hirai is broadly directed to a pneumatic tire construction

Art Unit: 1791

and it is evident that the respective outer diameters are a function of the specific tire being manufactured. Thus, it is evident that a plurality of tire constructions in Hirai would satisfy the broad range of the claimed invention and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed range. It is further noted that the "overhang" described by Hirai is an absolute dimension and is not a function of the specific tire size (it is just required that the reinforcement layer reinforces the shoulder portion). Lastly, it is noted that an overhang of 10 mm suggests that the radial separation between the respective ends is less than 10 mm- such a separation suggests that the claimed radial separation (measured at tread center, not belt end) would have falling between 6.5% and 13% of the diameter at the end of the overhang.

Regarding claim 5, the claim is directed to the method of forming the belt reinforcement layer and thus does not further define the structure of the claimed tire construction. It is further noted that Hirai discloses a method in which the belt reinforcement layer is formed by winding strips (Page 20, Lines 5-10).

5. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirai and Reuter as applied in claim 1 above and further in view of Poque. As detailed above, Hirai in view of Reuter substantially teaches the tire of the claimed invention, including a belt reinforcement layer formed of a reinforcing element having an elongation between 1.5% and 5.5% at a loading of 67 N. The references, however, fail to suggest the use of cords having a lower modulus (higher elongation) in the overhang portion, as compared to the cords used in the region above the belt layers. Poque, on the other

hand, is directed to a similar tire construction comprising an outermost belt reinforcement layer, wherein the shoulder regions are formed with a cord having a smaller modulus, as compared to the cord used in the overlapped portion. Poque further teaches that such a construction improves dimensional stability during high speed running. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to use a cord having a smaller modulus in the shoulder portion, as compared to the overlapped portion.

6. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirai and Reuter as applied in claim 1 above and further in view of Nishizawa. As detailed above, Hirai in view of Reuter disclose a tire construction having a belt reinforcement layer that is directly adjacent the belt layers in an overlapped region and directly adjacent a carcass layer in an overhang region. While the reference fails to expressly disclose the cord-to-cord distance (based on topping rubber separation) between reinforcing elements in adjacent layers, the claimed range is consistent with topping rubbers conventionally used in tire constructions. Nishizawa provides one example of a tire construction in which the cord-to-cord distance between cords in adjacent belt layers is between 0.5 mm and 1.3 mm (Column 2, Lines 65+), which is almost identical to the claimed range. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to form the tire of Hirai in view of Reuter with the claimed separation. It is further noted that while the reference fails to expressly define a distance between a belt layer and a carcass layer, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention

would have recognized the values of Nishizawa as being consistent with (on the order of) the separation of reinforcement elements in adjacent tire layers. Lastly, applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed separation.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-5 (in regards to Riva) have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

In regards to claim 2, applicant argues that the belt reinforcing layer of Hirai takes the form of an arc having a relatively small radius of curvature and thus, does not disclose or suggest limiting the outer diameter of the reinforcing layer. As noted above, however, the "overhang" described by Hirai is an absolute dimension and is not a function of the specific tire size (it is just required that the reinforcement layer reinforces the shoulder portion). Thus, the claimed ratio would be greater in smaller tires and somewhat smaller in larger tires (overhang distance is an absolute dimension). Furthermore, the benefits of improved durability are purported benefits and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed relationship.

As to claim 5, applicant contends that Nishizawa discloses a vertical distance between two adjacent belt layers and is silent regarding the distance between a belt reinforcement layer and a belt layer or the distance between a belt reinforcement layer and a carcass layer. The examiner agrees. However, as set forth in the rejection, the claimed range is consistent with topping rubbers conventionally used in tire

Art Unit: 1791

constructions and Nishizawa provides one example of in which the reinforcement cords in adjacent belt layers have a separation between 0.5 and 1.3 mm, which is almost identical to applicant's claimed range. It is emphasized that the belt reinforcing layer of Hirai is a belt layer and thus, the teaching of Nishizawa is directly analogous to the tire construction of Hirai (generally teaches separation between adjacent tire layers, such as belt layers). In regards to the carcass layer, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have recognized the values of Nishizawa as being consistent with (on the order of) the separation of reinforcement elements in adjacent tire layers. Lastly, applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed separation.

Conclusion

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

Art Unit: 1791

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Justin R. Fischer** whose telephone number is **(571) 272-1215**. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on (571) 272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Justin Fischer
/Justin R Fischer/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1791